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PART TWO

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BIOGRAPHY OF KARL JERING

Technical Sergeant, Chi-Stelle
Luftwaffe SIS

I. Youth and Education, 1914-1936

The author, son of a Czech civil service employees, was born on January 21, 1914, in Orlau, Silesia. His father was a Russian German. The rural population of the province was a mixture of Czechs and Poles. The small towns, in those times inhabited by the friendly, easy-going people of the old Austria, were preponderantly German. During the first World War the family moved to Teschen, a city divided after the Treaty of Versailles between Czechoslovakia and the Polish Republic. Since the Poles began with ruthless persecution of all that was German from the very beginning of their rule, the family settled in the Czech section of the town. There were still some schools of good tradition left to the Germans, and he was able to attend these. After finishing the Gymnasium at Oderberg, he entered the German University in Prague, where he studied History, French, English and Comparative Literature. Absorbed by this work, he won a travelling fellowship to Italy for a year, beginning in the summer of 1935, as an award for a philosophical treatise.

Having lived in a strangely fashioned state rife with the slow drifts and incessant frictions of half a dozen nationalities, the author was impressed by the high flow of national life, and the eager ambition that filled the Italians in those days, although he soon noticed a certain incongruity between the political aspirations of Fascism and the actual resources of the land. Though there was an increasing menace of war on account of Signor Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure,

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Europe still enjoyed relative quiet and he was not distracted from his studies, which were devoted to research in Philosophy, History and Aesthetics. He even profited by the League of Nations' boycott on Italy, and contemplated the quietness of Italian museums where he was frequently the only visitor.

For several months he cycled up and down the peninsula, becoming acquainted with the real life of the sympathetic, good-natured people. Coming in contact with scholars such as Benedetto Croce, he found the best traditions of European thought and intelligence more quickened here than elsewhere on the continent.

The year passed; with its end came the Spanish Civil War, which put off indefinitely a trip to Spain which he had planned. However, two fellowships from the Italian Government permitted him to prolong his stay in Italy. Then in February, 1937, he returned to Prague, having written while in Italy a dissertation on "Benedetto Croce as a Philosopher and Historian".

II. Politics and Social Life, 1936-1938

During his absence things had changed radically in Czechoslovakia. Not only had his college friends disappeared into professional life, but the whole spiritual atmosphere was scarcely recognizable. The economic crisis in Czechoslovakia, particularly felt in the intemperate thickly populated regions along the German border, called for energetic measures. The needy, politically-subdued Germans looked more and more to the Third Reich, where, as in Italy, a strong authoritarian state was forming. In the 1935 election the newly-founded National Party of the Sudeten Germans had carried more than two-thirds of the German votes; so it came into office in the Czech Parliament as the second strongest. The Czechs, who feared for their State, sought alliance with France and Russia. England at that time was working

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for a balance: this was the purpose of Lord Runciman's mission which twice visited the most controversial of the German sections in Bohemia.

Political accents could not be overlooked any longer. They came up in every question, and tintured even the most traditional aspects of university life. The writer was put in a delicate position. Before his trip to Italy, he had been an active participator in musical activities, particularly the performance of chamber music, which was so much a part of the life of Prague society, and the homes in which most of this took place were those of wealthy Jews. Also the two philosophy professors who administered his examinations, and for whom he subsequently worked as an assistant, were of Jewish extraction. Furthermore the truculent nationalism, the confining of all creative thought to problems of one's own people, was repellent to his mind. And this became more and more the hallmark of the higher academic life in the New Germany. On the other hand he could not resist the great force which was driving all Germans to national unity and reawakening. Considered by both parties as politically unreliable, he spent another year in Prague which was productive but harried.

III. The Sudeten Crisis, Fall of 1938

In the summer of 1938 he took a holiday trip to Germany, which country he now visited for the first time. In the course of two months he toured all the picturesque cities of the center and the south of the Reich. Some things made a considerable impression on him, others went against his grain. A new mass movement of human beings seemed to have awaked in the Reich; the individual felt himself strangely dissolved and obliterated by it all. But there was no denying the improvement in the nation's health and well-being. There was however the anxious question: - what was all this power going to lead to?

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The Nazi press was at that time paving the way for the Anschluss of the German-inhabited border of Czechoslovakia. Shortly before the outbreak of the political crisis he returned to Prague. The town was full of unrest; and attacks on Germans, when they didn't hide their identity, were the order of the day. Henlein's party had organized its own guard. In order to avoid being sent into battle against their blood brothers of the Sudeten, Germans crossed the border over into Germany en masse. As war seemed imminent, the writer also decided to return to Germany. Because of his studies the Czechs had postponed his compulsory military service several times, of which he was very glad, as he was haunted by the possibility of having to bear arms against his own countrymen.

The week he spent in the Sudeten German Volunteer Corps was one of the worst experiences he ever had. Talebearing, hypocrisy, short-sightedness, vindictiveness and vengeful chauvinism were rife among the party bosses who had been intrusted with leadership. Fortunately the Munich Pact prevented war. The Wehrmacht moved into the Sudetenland, while the masses of Sudeten German Volunteer Corpsmen and refugees were sent to labour camps in Germany until order and communications were re-established in their homeland.

The author was sent to a Reichsautobahn Camp near Hersfeld. Here he found the same oppressive impersonality that typifies all large scale enterprises. The life of the individual was indeed astonishingly well-ordered and considered, but all semblance of personality and exercise of free will seemed engulfed by this all-embracing authority. The camp offered even remarkable comforts, but a man felt in it as though he had lost the responsibility for his own soul. Moreover a certain military rigidity and ruggedness unyielding to reason, tinged even the civilian life. There was always someone in charge even of the most important functions. So he returned as quickly as possible to his country, "the Sudetenland"

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and arrived in Reichenberg in the middle of October 1938. This had become the capital city of the new Gau.

IV. Return to Civil Life, 1938-1939

One after the other he ran across old friends. The fact that he got a job at once was thanks to his nerve in undertaking the delivery of a secret order to Sudeten HQ. at Prague, which city was still in a turbulent state. He was put in charge of questions pertaining to university administration and science in the Government of the Sudetengau. Never in his life was he more miserable than when fulfilling these functions. The State authority was no more than a facade, the real power lay entirely in the hands of the Party. The Party bosses very rarely had any special training for their jobs, and attained their positions solely because of political connections. The writer took advantage of the time on his hands to study Konrad Henlein's library on Soviet Russia.

V. Approach of World War II

During the fatal year of 1939 every intelligent man could see more and more clearly that Europe was about to be at war. The re-armament race grew hotter and the political situation became ever more threatening. Intellectual life seemed poisoned; it was useless to think of anything but politics. Already in 1937 the writer had stated in an essay on "D.H. Lawrence", that there would be a second World War on a far larger scale than the first. In March 1939 he learned that the Party was preparing a special staff for the occupation of Poland. At the same time he knew from a good source that England would not back down again. When in the summer of 1939 the Germans opened their press campaign against Poland, and the Poles indulged themselves in orgies of warlike delirium, he requested leave, in order to spend the last few months in retirement and the peace of the country.

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course of these first dreary winter months all enthusiasm for the military service was spent.

VII. Basic Military Training, Spring 1940

Civil life receded into the distance. Gradually each soldier grew accustomed to his uniform, and the prospects of active military service, since the war was already in progress, served to bolster his fortitude. After the experiences following World War I, every German was aware that there was no avoiding the implications of the future. In spite of existing unpleasant conditions, there was but little basic opposition to the system. It was realized that the whole people faced a tremendous task; consequently the average individual looked with considerable cheer upon the prospects facing him. Oppressive as was the rigidity of the machinery in which the national life was caught up, no one believed matters could be handled more elastically. So of necessity militarism was tolerated since it was appreciated that it was the instrument wherewith a better order of things was to be attained. Moreover the people by virtue of the years of tutelage under National Socialism were accustomed to leave their leaders undisturbed in the latter's' planning.

On the western Front the war was limited largely to patrol activities during the course of the winter. The sector that any one individual overlooked was indeed small; on the other hand, German leadership was not the least modest in proclaiming its own virtues. During this time every effort was made to build up the German forces. In the training camps of Germany and Poland millions of recruits were prepared for the forth-coming summer campaign against France and England. The writer also received orders assigning him for training to a unit of the Luftwaffe Signal Corps near Berlin.

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This training was rugged but without cruelty. The Prussian military regimen was enduring since the recruits enjoyed ample food, comfortable billets, and above all were physically conditioned. However, training was not nearly so rigorous in the Luftwaffe Signal Corps, as in the Army at large, and especially in the Waffen-SS. Yet, only after the reversals suffered in Russia did the spit and polish give way to more realistic schedules of training.

The writer found both the quantity as well as quality of the recruit instruction rather scanty. This could be attributed in large measure to the mediocre quality of the officer instructors. The Luftwaffe Signal Corps was held to be very modern in every respect, and had excellent equipment. But its officer corps was composed mostly of elderly, technically-unqualified reserve officers whose age precluded them from front line duty. The senior officers appeared before the recruits only on special occasions, their tunics covered with the decorations of World War I. In the main their efforts were dedicated to life in the officers' clubs. The junior officers, in the main mere youths, had much broader contact with their men, but lacked the maturity to influence them constructively. Besides, their thinking and feeling suffered from all the restrictions implanted by their training under National Socialism. So both the military and technical training of the recruits lay almost entirely in the hands of the non-commissioned officers. Within their modest scope many were excellent, and dedicated themselves to their tasks most conscientiously. They were both physically and technically well trained, but quite ruthless in their methods. Yet later, they proved the best of comrades.

After completion of his recruit training, the author was retained at the center to assist in the training of further recruits. Although he was flattered in this, as only the best of the graduates were chosen for the duty, the decision oppressed him for two reasons: first, it caused him to miss participation in the French cam-

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campaign; secondly, he became no more than a cog in the training machine. Day and night he was fettered to his recruits, and had to supervise them from the time of their waking until again they went to sleep. Anyone who does not see the sole purpose of life to lay in drilling must be repulsed by such occupation. So he exerted himself to be rid of the hateful job, using his linguistic ability as an excuse. Finally, in July, 1940, his wish was fulfilled, and he was transferred to the Chi-Stelle in Potsdam (Marstall).

VIII. The Marstall

Though the training center and the Marstall lay but a short distance from each other, a greater contrast could scarcely be conceived. Whereas life in the training center was one of constant hurry, the Marstall breathed an atmosphere of peace and quietude, with an amount of free time such as only a Ministry could boast. The bulk of the employees of the Marstall still wore civilian clothes, so that the few uniformed officers looked strangely out of place. One met there the most colorful assortment of personalities; adventurers, seamen and naturalized foreigners who spoke only a very broken German, and conversed by preference in their mother tongue. There were also political refugees, merchants, lawyers, publishers, and teachers. The variety of types made life at the Chi-Stelle quite fascinating. In character also this motley crew represented strange extremes. Besides a portion of very interesting individuals, there was not a negligible number of those who abused their key positions in the pursuit of sordid ends. Due to the tolerance of the system, many of the latter succeeded in avoiding the consequences of their excesses for a considerable time; but eventually some were court-martialed.

The author had much time to observe and study the scene at the Marstall. He found it useful soon to forget the crudities of the drill field, for in the Marstall

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polished manners still had a certain validity. Personal discussion filled many hours. In this the author enjoyed certain advantages over those presented to him during the period of his recruit training. During his free time he roamed at large about Berlin. The huge sprawling city at first made rather an unfavorable impression upon him, accustomed as he was to the classical pattern of the Italian cities. Moreover, the lack of politeness in Berlin repelled him. Yet he found that in people a rough exterior often concealed a warm heart. Great plans had been hatched for the re-building of Berlin in entirety; then came the war putting an end to all this ambition.

IX . First Experiences in Referat B

Referat B, the link between the SIS in the West and the A-2 of the General Staff of the Luftwaffe, was, at this time, rather unimportant. Organization of the out-stations was just in its infancy, and the co-operation between the Chi-Stelle and the W-Leitstellen without fruitfulness. Contact consisted largely of an exchange of papers; but it was evident that in this the Chi-Stelle was the principal beneficiary, since the efficient work was done by the small out-stations in the field. Moreover, the chief concern of the people in the Marstall seemed to be their own personal welfare and advancement. In this the civil employees possessed a valuable tradition of privileges. So very early it became apparent to the author that the vital problems of the service could not be studied to best advantage there. Consequently he reverted to his primary interests, the study of languages and literature in which he made almost as much progress for the time being as though he were still a student at the university. Thus the war represented for him, as it did for thousands of other young open-minded Germans who gathered in the SIS during this time, not an exposure to bloodshed and danger, but, at the worst, only a suspension of opportunity to pursue one's civil affairs.

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The author's first duty at the Marstall was the evaluation of British R/T traffic of the 10 Fighter Group. For this purpose a mound of log sheets was placed daily upon his desk of which he knew nothing beyond the fact that they were written in English. What to do with these papers? What purpose did his work serve? For the answers to these questions he had to rely upon his common sense. Other of his comrades, who entered the Marstall about the same time, were no better instructed in their tasks. The civil employees, to whom the stream of young soldiers now entering the Marstall, and often superior to them in knowledge and culture, and who represented a threat to their privileges, offered no assistance. But the newcomers fortunately were pressed by no one, so that ample time was afforded them to find their own way. For the Marstall in 1940 the war had not yet begun. So the author divided his files into "airfields", "units", and "strength reports" of the RAF fighters between Middlewallop and Colerne, and acquainted himself with the terminology of the RAF Fighter Command. At this time the SIS had already reconstructed the organization of the RAF Fighter Command, the exactness of which was confirmed by certain documents obtained from the Bolsheviks.

More interesting than this fighter evaluation work was the interception of the broadcasts of the BBC, which were copied three times daily and translated for the benefit of the A-2. After having worked for several weeks in the Chi-Stelle, the author was by chance transferred to the A-2 section of the General Staff. This section possessed the records of the French Ministry, and sought for specialists who could evaluate them. The author was very happy about this change, for he now found himself engaged upon very congenial work. However, much to his regret, the transfer was shortly revoked, because the commander of the Chi-Stelle, an old, sullen major, had not approved of it.

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X. Transfer to France

On 10 October 1940 Referat B was transferred to Asnieres-sur-Oise near Paris. The commander of the Chi-Stelle and his staff accompanied the Referat. The Czech Government, shortly before its collapse, had granted to the author a fellowship to France, but political events precluded his making use of it. France, after World War I, adopted a very liberal and farsighted cultural policy toward those States newly-created by the Versailles Treaty, and more than any other of the small nations, the Czechs were influenced by it. France was not only their national protector, but their cultural idol as well. So the author had ample opportunity during his student years to form a mental picture of that land. Now as a soldier came the chance to compare the pre-conceived picture with reality.

What impressed him most immediately upon his arrival in France, was the apparent fact that human energy did not stand at a high level. Unkempt forests, barren fields and decadent villages were to be seen on every side, all in such marked contrast to what the author had observed in other parts of Europe he had visited. Certainly war had scourged the land. The highways were still crowded with refugees seeking to return to the northern departments. Yet it was to be perceived that it was not alone the current lack of vitality that had brought about the defeat of France, but something of ingrained decadence. There were houses in Asnieres destroyed in World War I that lay still in ruins. On all sides a spirit of lassitude prevailed.

Most of the men of the Referat had known France before the war. Many had acquaintances in Paris with whom they were eager to re-establish contact. The population with proverbial countessy, met the German soldiers amiably; the latter were under strict orders to deport themselves graciously. In France the per capita wealth

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in chattels was considerably higher than in Germany. Yet even Czechoslovakia enjoyed a higher standard of living than did the latter. Germany was suffering still the evil effects of World War I even at the time it began re-armament.

The transfer to France had a favorable effect upon the work of the Referat. The out-stations no longer lay at such unreasonable distances, and in consequence the specialists of the Referat could easily establish contact with those who furnished them with the material upon which they worked. However an exchange of personnel, which would have been both convenient and advantageous, was undertaken only at a later date. Nevertheless, work became more concrete. With increasing interest the young soldiers took up their labors, while the civil employees had to forsake their isolation, the more so as the younger among them were forced to change into uniform.

XI. Difficulties in Fighter Traffic, November 1940-April 1941

The change-over from HF to VHF of the RAF Fighter Command was a hard blow to the Luftwaffe SIS. Squadron after squadron that had all been properly documented in the files could no longer be heard, even though A-2 reported a revival of activity on the part of the RAF. With all possible energy production of the SADIR VHF receiver was hastened. German industry did not produce a radio receiver the equal of this French one. From February, 1941, on, the important out-stations on the Channel Coast were re-equipped with this set, and were once again able to monitor R/T fighter traffic. The monitoring of the traffic of 11 and 10 Fighter Groups of the RAF, the most vital to the Germans, was again assured.

On account of the temporary cessation of fighter traffic material coming into the Referat, the author changed over to the Coastal Command section where he decoded the messages of long range reconnaissance aircraft intercepted by W/T units. To-

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gether with many other young soldiers who had joined the Referat during the previous summer, the author took great interest in evaluation work, and tried to broaden the basis of his SIS knowledge. Yet this endeavor encountered the sympathy neither of the old civil employees, whose more thorough knowledge represented their last claim to privileges, nor with his superiors who resented any disturbance to a fixed plan. This period of duty in the Coastal Command Section of the Referat had for the author a further advantage in that he was on night duty there and had the days free to participate in the cultural life of Paris. The operas, theatres, and cinemas in the French capitol had been re-opened and flourished as in peace-time. Periodicals and publications were produced in a volume that far surpassed that of war-time Germany.

XII. Re-organization of the RAF Fighter Command

As the German air offensive against Great Britain in the autumn of 1940 waned, the author observed with some anxiety the rebuilding of the RAF that proceeded throughout the succeeding winter. German military specialists were of the opinion that this fact was of no great importance. Increasing submarine successes, and the favorable conclusion of the campaigns in Norway and the Balkans convinced most everyone at home that German arms were invincible.

After two rival section chiefs had through mutual intrigue eliminated each other, the author took over the fighter traffic section. The section comprised seven men amongst whom there were no civil employees. These men were inexperienced but possessed common sense and sound judgement, and their association was a very happy one. Because of the change-over to VHF on the part of the RAF Fighter Command, SIS coverage was limited practically to south and southeast England only. The use of airborne intercept operators flying from Norway to effect coverage of

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central and northern England, undertaken about this time, had to be discontinued because German industry was unable to produce a satisfactory airborne VHF search receiver for this work.

Effort on the part of the British toward the formation of new operational training units, the incredibly rapid expansion of the ground organization, the tremendous training traffic on all airfields, and the monthly growth of new squadrons on the air front, together with their change-over to the newest models of aircraft, constituted a great source of worry for those whose work made them painfully aware of these circumstances. In addition, the British radar, which had hardly been considered by the German High Command during the rush of the autumn offensive, now made itself clearly felt in all its deadly effectiveness. The writer remembers the sensation created in the Luftwaffe General Staff by an article in a British magazine, which credited entirely to radar the defeat of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. A small circle of experts who had in vain given early warning of mysterious new devices on the way, felt a macabre satisfaction when the proof of their warning came finally to hand.

In the spring of 1941, the final organization of the SIS in the West was created. To each of the SIS companies was assigned a special task, and the SIS units of Luftflotte 2 which remained in the West after the transfer of W-Leit 2 to the East, were incorporated into the battalion remaining in Paris. The Referat as the final evaluation agency compiled all the data and findings of the SIS in the West. This structure of the SIS in the West continued with slight changes only up to the time of the Invasion.

XIII. Promotions and Decorations in the SIS

In March, 1941, the author was detailed to attend a non-commissioned officers training course. After promotion of the civil employees to the grade of sergeant,

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it was required that any soldier seeking similar promotion would be obliged to attend a special training school. It was a repetition of well-known military stuff; but it was wholesome for the body already grown soft in the confining atmosphere of the office. In the matter of promotions and decorations, the chief of the Referat had only the power to recommend. Strangely enough, final action in these matters reposed in the hands of the company commander who was a mere administrative officer, denied even the privilege of entering the SIS working offices. So the advancement of the SIS evaluators seemed to depend least of all upon the quality of their work. Promotion of evaluators to officer rank also seemed to be carefully avoided. Officers of the SIS, and especially of the Chi-Stelle, seemed to be recruited preferably directly from the drill field and were chosen in the main from among the Hitler Jugend. Some of the more ambitious civil employees of the Chi-Stelle did attain officer rank. They established a firm personnel policy, and succeeded in holding the Referat aloof from a too militaristic policy. Even at that knowledge and ability were at a rather low premium. So, although the author had prepared one of the outstanding SIS reports, and also had made himself a specialist in almost every branch of evaluation work, it required four years before he was promoted to the grade of technical sergeant, when for the first time he could command treatment such as due a self-respecting person. Neither in this time did he receive any recognition for the work he did over the last years, most of which time he was employed only upon delicate missions. It seemed always that upon the completion or solution of a particular mission or problem that another was immediately thrust upon him.

The author's experience in this respect can not be considered a fortuitous one; it was typical rather for the SIS service as a whole. He found many excellent and well-qualified comrades during his travels, especially in the out-stations, who

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suffered bitterly under the system, and were ground down in the competition between themselves and less worthy but politically more gifted rivals. The unit commanders often nurtured these rivalries for thereby they could secure their own positions. The system as a whole manifested a deep-rooted distrust toward every free and independent human activity. Judgement and capacity were needed it is true; but they did not of necessity recommend a man. Observing the situation, the author withdrew very early from all this disgusting competition. While by dint of perseverance some of his comrades, in the last year of the war, attained the grade of lieutenant, the author was never recommended as an officer candidate because of his critical views. This filled him only with a sense of satisfaction. He was happy not to be a representative of a cause which due to its basically unsound principles, on one hand toward the world at large, on the other toward the human personality, paved the way not only to its own but to the people's catastrophe.

XIV. Report on the Non-Stop Offensive

After finishing the training course, the author returned to his work in the Referat. Special difficulties arose in the field of the British night fighters, for there appeared in the R/T traffic indications of the use of certain electronic devices, which were then unknown to the Germans. Also the British system of night fighter control was worked out for the first time on the basis of the log sheets covering night fighter traffic. To illustrate the basically erroneous personnel policy generally, it may be mentioned that the Referat, although a high-level Luftwaffe office, possessed no specialists trained in electronics. In consequence complicated questions bearing upon electronics were often handled on behalf of the Referat by students of philology, which of course did not prove very fruitful.

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The outbreak of the war in the East was taken advantage of by the British to launch an air offensive using their newly-created fighter arm for this purpose. Day after day the British Spitfires challenged the few German Jagdgruppen left on the Channel Coast to battle. At this time the precise and successful work of the SIS out-stations shaped the defensive tactics of the German fighters. Now it proved to be of the greatest importance that in spite of the limited range of VHF, the most important fighter control centers in the British offensive, namely Kenley, Biggin Hill, Northolt, Northweald, Manston, Tangmere, Middlewallop, Exeter, Portreath and Colerne were still within range of the RADARS. Evaluation now had a two-fold nature: that performed by the duty/^{officer}at the out-stations, which was tactical; and that undertaken by the Referat which was of strategic value. It proved to be extremely difficult to explain to the incredulous A-2 the rich, uninterrupted supply of aircraft and crews to the RAF, which half a year back had seemed totally defeated.

There followed in the wake of the campaign in the East a succession of resounding victories, and the British non-stop offensive petered out even as the German one of the previous year, spotlighting the brilliancy and superiority of the German fighter pilot. So Hitler felt himself sufficiently strong in his alliance with Japan to declare war on America. But in the midst of their march into Russia, the flower of the German Army froze to death during the dreadful winter of 1941/1942. At the same time a small circle of trusted experts began to see the implications of the threat to Germany that lay in the British bombing offensive. The Referat was then included in the distribution of the comprehensive daily situation report of A-2, the circulation of which was extremely limited. By impartial study of these detailed reports, which included losses and damage sustained through enemy action as well as those inflicted on the British or Russians, it was obvious that the mastery of air had finally slipped from German hands.

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Since the writer had the impression that because of propaganda and duty-bound optimism only a few even of the responsible officers were familiar with these facts, he began, on his own initiative, in the fall of 1941, a semi-annual report on the British non-stop offensive. In it he stressed with all emphasis the overwhelming air effort of the British after the Battle of Britain. He presented all the information available to German intelligence about British fighter control, supply, equipment, organization, state of training, and the advantages and disadvantages of their tactics, so radically different from the German. This paper aroused considerable attention in the German Fighter Command, and the A-2 requested an analogous report on British night fighters. He never learned of any practical results; things had gone too far for Germany to profit any more by experience.

XV. General Situation at the Beginning of 1942.

The Russian theatre was at that time drawing the lion's share of attention. In a great spirit of sacrifice, the German people rose to the occasion and contributed clothes for the relief of its soldiers, who without winter equipment were facing the coldest weather in 134 years. The High Command exerted itself to the utmost to create new offensive armies and weapons for the battles of the following summer. America's entry into the war left Army and Luftwaffe still unaffected. The general information about America was disparagingly superficial, and the successes of German submarines on America's east coast provided further grist for the mill of national smugness and vanity. It was not only considered a crime, but also a colossal stupidity to harbour any doubts of ultimate German victory.

The rise of the Referat in importance and prestige was continuous. After having found the form of organization suitable to perform the work and meet the requirements of a military unit, the inevitable contrasts in a society of men so differentiated

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by origin and education were gradually merged. At the same time co-operation, not only within the Referat, but between it and the out-stations became closer and more fruitful of results. Temporary duty and exchange of personal among the SIS units at this time also served to further mutual trust and understanding. Thanks to his uniform, the individual enjoyed even greater freedom of thought and action than was then common to civil life, since with respect to the ever more burdensome war situation the civilian suffered under constantly aggravated control, every able-bodied man being spurred to greater effort by pointing out to him the example of the front-line troops.

By virtue of two furloughs in the course of a year, and constant correspondence with his family and acquaintances, the author maintained contact with his homeland. Moreover, he never failed on journeys to deviate in his trips to include a visit to one or another of the occupied countries, in order to observe at first hand the conditions of life there. So in 1940 he visited Cracow, in 1941 Austria and Alsace, in 1942 Prague. In addition to the German press, he remained familiar throughout the course of the war with that of Great Britain and America. He was even able to follow the appearance of new editions on the European book market. Many of the men serving in the Referat had lived in countries overseas; some of them owned property in South America, Canada or Great Britain, the outbreak of the war having caught them on visits to their homeland. Their views of German successes in the war were divided and manifold. Among the personnel of the Referat there were no significant Party members, and the officers had but little influence upon these self-assured non-coms. So a very liberal atmosphere prevailed, which compensated, in some degree, for the official suspicion and mistrust with which SIS personnel was generally regarded.

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Since in the spring of 1942 some out-stations had to be erected in Spain, one of which was taken over by the assistant chief of the Referat, the author was called upon to take over his post. His duties consisted in the distribution of all incoming papers and documents, the control of all outgoing teletype messages and reports, and the advising of the chief of the Referat in all personnel and evaluation problems. This position gave him a perfect insight into all the work of the Referat as well as co-ordination and liaison with all offices both superior and subordinate to it. The post even gained in interest when the old chief of the Referat was transferred, and his place taken by an energetic and capable young captain, who finally exploited all the possibilities that lay in this central office with its excellent personnel.

XVI. Life in France 1941-1942

During this time it was felt that the Germans commenced to fail in availing themselves of the opportunity presented by the occupation of France. The favorable impression created in the minds of the French by the unobjectionable and correct behavior of the German soldiers gradually took an adverse turn as occupational policy failed more and more to assume a positive and constructive slant. In consequence misunderstandings and blunders accumulated. By its might alone military power could not prevail; in fact it lost in moral force since challenge of a military order, however unjust, is out of the question. To all of this was added the effect of the wretched personnel policy of the system, which already within the Reich itself had driven every German of good-will to despair. Accordingly political developments in France were not dissimilar to those that had occurred in Germany; the decent and unselfish men who believed in the regeneration of Europe, and supported this cause with all their might, were alienated by a megalomaniac band of adventurers, and in bitterness retired from public life, which fell more and more into decay and dis-

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credit, so that by the middle of 1942 life in this country had become more dreary and shabby than that of Germany.

A further reason for the deterioration of good feeling lay in the fact that the French, as a former enemy nation, had a much better sense than the Germans of the implications inherent in the changing military situation. They felt it for example, in the increasing attacks of the RAF Bomber Command on French industrial and communications targets, which caused a considerable number of casualties among the civilians. In spite of mutual damage, these raids served further to poison relations between the French and Germans since the RAF raids were ascribed to the presence of the Wehrmacht in France.

XVII. Re-Transfer to the Marstall, October 1942

Under these circumstances, the author did not feel unhappy when his old chief asked for his return to the Marstall in order to assist him in the re-organization of Referat C, though the last autumn in France was beyond comparison. After two years of absence it was found that great changes had come about in Berlin. The comfortable, ministerial atmosphere in the Marstall existed no longer. Many of the civilians generally were now in uniform, and the German face bore traces of worry on account of the endless, costly battles in the East, to which no conclusion was in sight. Still life was quite good, and civilian aid to the armed forces was exemplarily organized. Not unjustly the German press boasted the Reich as the country of Europe, which, after three years of war, showed the soundest economy and the least of war damage.

The predecessor of the author's chief in the Referat C, one of those wretched persons who in the confusion of war had managed to ingratiate himself into a position of authority which he used only for his personal advantage, was finally cashiered

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from his post under the urging of the A-2, who was extremely interested in receiving reliable SIS reports from what was then the very important Mediterranean theatre of operations. The inheritance of his successor was very meagre indeed: a Referat of about twenty men, all without any training or experience; and an unwholesome reputation at all subordinate and superior headquarters.

The author was very much interested in the Mediterranean theatre. He knew the land and the forces that there opposed each other. As deputy chief of Referat C he reformed the entire routine of the work, trained the specialists, while parasites and favorites were either rendered innocuous or transferred to out-stations. The out-stations were given definitely to understand that their reports were all processed and checked in the Referat, and that they could no longer conduct their affairs according to whim. In addition, he took over the evaluation of the Ferry and Transport Section of the Referat, which was deemed the most important at that time. Special communiques from the German High Command that were filling the ears of the people with the feats of the Army, Luftwaffe, and the submarines, paled into insignificance before the fact that the Americans had quietly established one of the most significant traffic routes of the world across the sands of the Sahara, and the virgin forests of central Africa.

After having eliminated the trouble makers and petty manipulators from the Referat, the remaining personnel proved to be excellent once they were introduced to their real tasks. Here also there were interesting characters. Some of these soldiers, who in civilian life were lawyers, journalists, teachers and merchants, were able to maintain contact with their civilian background. Thus much interesting news was divulged for which one sought in vain in the German press. Work in the Referat itself, because of the nature of its revelations, inspired no pleasant thoughts. There was something ghostly in watching the enormous reservoir of Allied

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might accumulating from day to day, whereas on the German side, thanks to Italian sabotage and British ASV, one German freighter after the other was sent to the bottom.

So the author foresaw clearly the threat to the Germans at El Alamein long before Rommel's unlucky offensive and the British counterthrust began. The German public was however fed every day with new illusions, and lived unaware of the facts. When a cousin of the author with orders to Crete in his pocket visited him, he was totally stunned when he learned of the situation that was awaiting him in the Mediterranean.

November 1942 brought misfortune to the Germans, which seemed typical for this month of the year. The Allies landed in Africa, and this fact revealed the fragility of the German position in the Mediterranean. Then came Rommel's continuous retreat; moreover rumors were whispered around the Marstall about the probable breakdown of the Ukrainian-Caucasus Front. Also in the West menace overshadowed. In Great Britain, the RAF evacuated a host of airfields for occupation by a mighty American Expeditionary Air Force. Already the first regular flights of B-17's and B-24's were intercepted over the North Atlantic route. Owing to the overwhelming air superiority the Luftwaffe had to face on all fronts, its missions were reduced to a minimum. By this measure strategic evaluation became of increasing importance. So again the Referate were enlarged. Since men were no longer available for clerical work, and, following the example of Referat B in Paris, women auxiliaries were employed in the Marstall.

Owing to the great increase in the number of frequencies to be monitored, additional personnel was naturally required by the out-stations and intercept companies. This requirement did not exist in the Marstall where from peace-time on

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there sat a number of persons without any definite assignment. Women auxiliaries were employed nevertheless. This displeased the author, for needless personnel tended to create confusion, and increase purposeless paper work in order to keep people busy. As planned by the author, evaluation was a work bound to an individual human personality. Now it took on the aspect of a large-scale, unimaginative paper enterprise.

Meanwhile the reputation of the Referat had been enhanced by reason of the fact that at last it fully met the expectations of the A-2, and also because its control of the W-Leitstellen was firm and positive, while its contacts with W-Leit, Southeast, in Athens, were extremely satisfactory and profitable. The contact with W-Leit 2 in Taormina, however always resulted in repeated questions and differences. Therefore, in order to acquaint himself with the situation there at first hand, the author schemed for temporary duty in Sicily for which he prepared his chief gradually.

The new year (1943) brought not only Montgomery's rapid advance in Africa, but also the disaster on the Ukrainian Front, and the battle of despair of the Sixth Army in Stalingrad. Day after day on the maps of the war room in the Marstall, the pins were moved back and back to mark the steps of the German retreat. Meanwhile the press was more optimistic than at any previous time, and continued to speak compassionately of the enemy. The contrast between this fiction and the reality was hard to bear, the moreso by the author since he had a friend in the Marstall who had previously been employed in the German Press Bureau, and who informed him that the propaganda chiefs were not certain whether to order a pompous celebration of the tenth anniversary of Hitler's accession to power, falling on January 30th, or to reserve this date for an announcement of the crushing defeat at Stalingrad

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in order to drive the people to the utmost of exertion. Only at the last moment was the decision made to pursue the latter course.

XVIII. Temporary Duty in Italy, February to June, 1943

Finally the author's wish was fulfilled when, in February 1943, he was ordered to a lengthy period of temporary duty in Italy. His orders directed that he acquaint himself with the intercept and D/F work of the out-station in Noto, Sicily; to write an SIS report on the RAF fighters based on Malta; and to observe and report on the work and liaison of all the SIS units in Sicily. It was for a sergeant a rather unusual assignment. So he was quite independent on the mission being allowed to employ his time according to the dictates of his judgement, and was able to move at will from one station to another without being hampered by unit commanders.

Between Berlin and Reggio in Calabria, there ran a daily train reserved for German troops. This train was so scheduled as to reach the Brenner Pass about midnight, which strengthened the suspicion that the Italians were fortifying the Brenner line. It was one of the most rapid railway journeys the author can recollect. Despite the fact that this period marked the beginning of the Allied bombing offensives, the Reichsbahn was still at the height of its efficiency. From Reggio on the Italians took over management of the traffic. And so the trip from Messina to Syracuse consumed as much time as the journey from Berlin to Reggio. Hours were spent in preparation for, and the journey itself across the Straits of Messina on one of the two remaining ferries that to that date had escaped the British bombers. The ferry was prepared to defend itself against aerial attack by mounting on its decks two antidiluvian cannon theatrically handled by Italian soldiers, at which sight the German flak gunners aboard broke into a roar of laughter.

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During the journey along the Sicilian coast, the author observed for the first time the effects of the bomb war upon a helpless people little able to sustain it. The sight of these wretched people, suffering as they did from malnutrition and agonizing fear, seemed grotesque to him, accustomed as he was to the grandiloquent tone of the Fascist newspapers. For what seemed endless hours the train stood in stations awaiting the "all clear" before proceeding. It was impossible to speak with anyone during this time, even with an Italian officer; all seemed totally nerve-wracked and exhausted.

Even with these first impressions, the author was forced to the conclusion that Italy had overstrained itself in entering the war. This affected him; he felt himself akin to this warm-hearted though poverty-stricken people for he had spent two of the happiest years of his life among the Italian people. He owed to their outstanding thinkers more than he did to his German teachers. It was Benedetto Croce and his disciples, who showed him the path to the great German tradition. He had known the Italian people during their ascent and in their pride, and had felt here for the first time a joy in belonging himself to a great European people. But this love and affection strengthened moreover by his interest in the fine arts, sharpened only his perception of the inevitable catastrophe that these people approached.

Life in southern Italy and Sicily was one of frightening poverty and squalor. It was no less than a crime to undertake the waging of a war with these starving millions, who had not reached the level of decent handicraft, against a highly industrialized continent. Among these people, the Fascist Party had lost all influence, though it is questionable whether it had ever possessed any. Its hysterical cry for greatness had nothing in common with this reality. In social conditions no progress had been made during the years of its rule. The mass of the population in the

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towns and on the land lived with no more enlightenment than did the slaves on the same soil two thousand years ago.

The Italian Army offered the same oppressive spectacle. The uninterrupted chain of war that since 1935 Mussolini had foisted upon the country had drained off the few good soldiers that Italy could boast. The grievances which the civilians suffered were mirrored also in the Army. The wages of an enlisted man, even of seven or eight years service, represented but a small fraction of that which a German soldier received. Moreover his relatives enjoyed no partial support or social advantage. Food and billets were so poor that many Italian soldiers sold their equipment, and in addition engaged in petty trade in order to live. On the other hand, the officers lived in luxury, and commissions could be purchased. Between officer and enlisted man existed no link or common bond of fate. Only in one thing did they agree: that for the distasteful business of fighting the German soldier was far better suited.

The author spent the spring of 1943 at the R/T out-station near Noto. The detachment was billeted in a castle of medieval primitiveness, which lay ten miles distant from the town on a eminence surrounded by precipices. If the weather permitted the houses on Malta were visible from the roof. The detachment possessed very experienced personnel. Its successes during the two Malta offensives were considerable. It had a land-line to the German fighter control at Comiso. The company of which the detachment was a part was stationed in Syracuse. Two D/F sets were at its disposal, one in the vicinity of the station, the other in Ragusa Sicily.

The virile, care-free life of this detachment, in such marked contrast to that in the stuffy atmosphere of the Marstall, pleased the author very much. For the

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first time he saw real co-operation between the SIS and the tactical units. During the time of missions on the part of the combat units, the SIS men were totally absorbed in their work. On the other hand, during their free time, they relaxed and enjoyed the life of a soldier. There were as in any other out-station, quite extraordinary types among these soldiers. The author became particularly friendly with one of them, a botanist by profession, with whom he strolled about the countryside studying the flora of the island. There was a considerable degree of social and intellectual life in this remote detachment. Every week there appeared a motion-picture truck or a troupe of actors. Even scientists visited the unit and gave lectures. There was also constant social contact with members of the Italian SIS. So this small detachment comprising about thirty men enjoyed a more significant cultural life than that of many towns with a thousand-fold population. Living conditions and the food were excellent, and wine was often more plentiful than water, which latter had to be carried up the mountainside from the valley below. So these months spent in rocky loneliness represented for most of the participants a most agreeable time, the more so since their work in later years was never so vital; for as yet the supremacy of the Luftwaffe had not yet slipped from its hands.

After acquainting himself with the work of the intercept operators, and that of the D/F stations, the author began to gather material for his report on Malta. Wherein material was scanty, or gaps appeared in the story, assistance was given by members of the detachment that had been participants in events ever since the beginning of the Battle of Malta. The more familiar he became with the situation, the more the author wondered that the island had not been taken in May, 1942, by parachute troops. Every individual member of this detachment who by his contact with the receivers, could perceive the increasing interruption of the German supply routes to Africa occasioned by the RAF combat aircraft based on Malta, agreed with

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the author in his conclusion that it was criminal negligence on the part of the German Command in not reducing the island, an opinion which he strongly expressed in his report. Agreement with this opinion was not found in the W-Leitstelle in Taormina, between the members of which and those of the detachment at Noto considerable difference existed. Therefore extensive comment and some rebuttal were added to the author's report by the W-Leitstelle before it was passed on to the Chi-Stelle.

After the completion of this part of his mission, the author proceeded on further travels. First he visited the W/T company in Syracuse which monitored the frequencies of the reconnaissance aircraft based on Malta, and the point-to-point networks in Africa. Their smoothly-functioning work offered no problems, the more so since it served, in the main, statistical purposes only. German ship movements from southern Italy and Sicily to Africa were constantly harassed by the RAF, since the Italian naval stations always furnished to the British information on the sailings of the convoys, and a sufficiently strong German escort was no longer available.

The author visited for a longer time with W-Leit 2 in Taormina. Here also he received a pleasing reception, but the moral climate of this luxurious abode of the German Luftwaffe Staff of the South did not attract him. W-Leit 2 boasted the oldest and most experienced evaluation personnel. The only thing to be said however of the officers corps was that it knew full well how to make the most of the agreeable life in this famous resort town. As a result the possibilities of the SIS in the western Mediterranean were not nearly so fully exploited as were the social attractions of this headquarters. Monitoring of the 12th USAAF had not advanced beyond preliminaries. Likewise, except for the exertions of W-Leit, Southeast, in Athens, the point-to-point networks of the Allied forces in North Africa remained

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unidentified, for the monitoring of which W-Leit 2 pretended not to have sufficient receivers. There was an absence of foresight and forthright contact with reality. Everyone took great pains not to come by the loss of his comfortable berth. The battalion was to all intents and purposes in a state of decay, and conditions cried for correction. A few months later when a large number of the officers were relieved, and the evaluation company was reorganized, the battalion became a model of excellence in the very same respects that previously had proved its greatest shame.

With what blind arrogance capable technical specialists were treated by their military superiors is well illustrated by the following example: Immediately after the surprise landing of the Allies in North Africa, a sergeant evaluator after great difficulties succeeded in securing permission to organize an SIS detachment to proceed to Elmas in Sardinia for the purpose of monitoring Allied traffic in Northern Africa. From this point he discovered the traffic of the air support networks of the American Fifth Army. He concentrated the work of his detachment in specialization upon this traffic, while he himself solved the American grid code system. In closest co-operation with the A-2 of the German Fighter Command in Sicily, who realized immediately the enormous value of this work and supported the sergeant in every respect, the messages of the air support networks were evaluated. A reading of these messages enabled early warning of American attacks by fighters and bombers on airfields remaining to the Germans in Tunisia, so that aircraft on those airfields could be withdrawn in ample time to escape destruction; thus considerable losses were spared to the German Luftwaffe. In recognition of the sergeant's services he was awarded, on recommendation of the fighter command, a high decoration. Far from being pleased with this success of one of its men, W-Leit 2 criticized him harshly for not having sent his reports to the fighter command through normal channels, and

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ordered his immediate return from Sardinia to Taormina. Although this was delayed by the intervention of the fighter command, the resourceful sergeant had lost standing in the eyes of his superiors. He eventually returned direct to battalion headquarters where he could more easily be held under the thumb.

The next stage of the author's journey brought him to the SIS company in Marsala, Sicily. This company was located in the outskirts of the town, which, several days before his arrival had been entirely destroyed by an attack of B-24's. Both the landscape and way of life in this part of the island was half-African. It was about this time that Tunisia fell, and the remnants of the SIS company from Africa gathered in this area. All things were pervaded by the feeling that the invasion of Sicily was imminent. The Italian soldiers, whose duty it was to guard the seaplane moorings in the harbor, fled into the mountains. So, during the evening bathing hour, the German soldiers could swim out to the aircraft which were left entirely unguarded.

The mass of the population lived in filth and misery. The destruction of the larger towns had caused a considerable paralysis of life. The Italian soldiery had already become so merged with the local populace that they appeared jointly as ragged, mendicant groups. It could not be believed that these disorganized bands would offer the least of resistance to a landing enemy. In no seacoast town could a remnant of the coastguard be found; in fact, they were entirely devoid of human life. Only the odor of death pervaded the atmosphere while the dogs and cats roamed hungrily about the shattered streets.

What was left of the German garrison on the island comprised principally supply and technical troops. Evidently the Germans had decided not to defend Sicily. Nevertheless, the German troops remaining on the island maintained iron discipline, and

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their accustomed soldierly bearing. During an excursion to Mt. Etna, the author had an opportunity to spend some days with the crews of a bomber Geschwader in Catania. Although this unit had suffered six hundred percent losses since its activation, the readiness of the crews to fly additional missions was as prompt as in the early days of the war. So the German soldier remained as the sole embodiment of order and discipline amidst the decay and despair of an amorphous mass.

The SIS company at Marsala had specialized upon the monitoring of the Allied radar reporting networks with which they had considerable success, since it had just reached the stage of breaking and reading the messages. However, personal difficulties among the men were especially vexatious since the youthful company commander still assumed the attitude of the unapproachable drill master, and had no proper understanding or appreciation of their work. Yet superior officers esteemed this type of company leader for, on one hand, he always deferred to their opinions, and, on the other, did not embarrass them by raising a discussion of technical questions. The author therefore departed this inhospitable milieu after three days in order to work with the VHF detachment on Mt. Erice, from which point he observed the sudden capitulation of Pantelleria. The mornings he spent in the small D/F van situated at the brim of a precipice high above the Milo airfield whence he could see Major Dahl and his brave fighter pilots taking off in the dawn of the coming day. Intercept operator, D/F man, and duty officer, he was all three at once, and, in his own small way, took a hand in the desperate battles of the German fighters, which often had to contend against a twenty-fold enemy. Around noon he was relieved, and could rest throughout the heat of the day. In the evenings he made friends with the shepherds of the hills, who amongst their flocks lived an almost ageless life in this Homeric landscape.

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XIX. Return to the Chi-Stelle, July 1943-January 1944

In the midst of his activity in Sicily, the author was recalled to the Marstall in Berlin by a message from the Chi-Stelle. The return trip was made without significant event. But since ferry service across the Straits of Messina had ceased, he was forced to fly to Italy even though the Sicilian airfields by this time were in a constant state of alert. In Naples he spent a night during the course of which the 205 Bomber Group of the RAF sank five freighters in the harbor which were loaded with coal. Proceeding northward he stopped in Frascati with the SIS liaison team stationed there, and carried away with him a very unfavorable impression of incompetent officers, and typists groomed to the point of affectation. However after months of squalid impressions, he was rather happily bewildered by the peace-like elegance and respectability of Roman life, though the inhabitants of Rome assured him that this was only a sham concealing national decadence, insecurity and hunger.

At this point the author definitely lost all hope in the war. Yet he little knew that what he had seen in Sicily and Italy was but the prelude to a general catastrophe that would spread throughout all of Europe, and that the ultimate expression of despair and degradation should be reserved for his own people. National discipline forbade that he think these thoughts aloud. Yet his worst fears were the more confirmed when a friend in Marsala assured him that within a year the friend and his company would have withdrawn to the fringes of the Alps. He realized at last that there was no chance left for a Europe led by Germany. In the West as in the East superior forces with superior equipment were already at work eroding the protecting covering of Europe by continuous thrusts at both its heart and periphery.

When he returned to Berlin, he noticed particularly how much more grey and cheerless German life had grown. It was as if every honest citizen of this people had

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become the beholden creature of the great Moloch of war. The whole aspect of life had something unhealthy about it; and so he found conditions in the Referat where a throng of tired soldiers and pallid girls were forced to engage in ten hours of daily labor on paper work, which seemed to the author to be less fruitful than ever before. He did not wish to become likewise bloodless and unbalanced by remaining any longer than necessary amidst these disheartening conditions. So immediately he requested a new mission in the field, and as far away from the paper-sick Marstall as possible.

But a new mission was not immediately forthcoming since his chief needed his experience in processing some HF R/T traffic, which was being monitored by certain out-stations in Greece, Italy, France and Spain. It concerned take-off and landing procedures emanating from American control towers in Africa, which enabled conclusions to be drawn from the density of traffic at different airfields. After having established the foundation for continuous analysis, and trained a man to continue the work, he wrote a confidential report on his experiences in Sicily; he was then granted a furlough, the last one he spent with his family.

About this time the author evolved a modest plan for his life. Its design ran generally as follows: After seeing something more of the world, and having established permanent contact with men of similar interests, he intended to seek a scientific post in his Silesian homeland either as keeper of archives or librarian, a type of endeavor for which he felt himself well suited by both education and inclination. He desired to exert his influence on the rural population of those districts of southern Silesia, which had been Slavicized on account of the religious quarrels of the Reformation, in order to provide for these people a richer cultural life. Since the prospects of his entry into public life were circumscribed by the fact that he was not a member of the Nazi Party, nevertheless he had the legitimate

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hope that following a war that would prove something less than catastrophic for Germany, a revision of the existing inflexible internal policy of the Reich would follow, resulting in a certain equalization of opportunity between Party members and veterans of the war.

During the various visits to his home he had frequent occasion to judge Party policy toward the conquered Slav people among whom he had spent his youth. Although the Czech Government had pursued a policy of de-nationalization toward the Sudeten Germans and other minority groups with the result that they, and particularly the Germans in the state, stood on the edge of an economic abyss, the brutal policy now followed by the Nazi Party toward the Czechs was no less short-sighted. Moreover, in those regions of Czechoslovakia and Poland, where different national groups lived side by side, the attrition of the war, which fell heavily upon the German elements in these groups since they were drafted into the Army and otherwise made to serve the German cause, became already apparent in 1943. Since the other national groups of the conquered territories of Czechoslovakia and Poland were not compelled likewise to serve the German cause, there was naturally created an imbalance as between their German neighbors and themselves both numerically and economically. So the hospitals were crowded with wounded, and what remained in the German settlements were largely old men, women and children. On the whole, the Czechs as a people had not suffered any losses at all. So while in individual cases Czech citizens were harshly treated by the German officials, these wretched creatures could be bribed by the Czechs, and, so, by the large, the Czechs remained able to handle their own affairs. Also the Czech workers who were impressed for labor in Germany invariably succeeded after a few months of work there in withdrawing from these loathesome duties, going underground and returning to their own country. So the impressions gleaned within these border countries in those days were a source

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of apprehension when looked upon with a sense of reality uncolored by prejudice. The fate of the remaining old men, women and children of German blood in these regions depended entirely upon events then transpiring in the East.

After the author's return to the Marstall, a field assignment similar to that which had taken him to Italy, but this time to the eastern Mediterranean, was denied to him by Major Friedrich, chief of the Chi-Stelle, with the remark that such duty would transcend the competence of his grade. The author had intended to organize there the monitoring of HF R/T traffic, which was then being accomplished by the out-stations without any co-ordinated plan. Since denial of this mission could only be interpreted as an expression of the displeasure of the chief of the Chi-Stelle on account of the frank report rendered concerning SIS conditions in Sicily, the author could only resign himself to a longer stay in the Marstall. After a few weeks hackwork here and there in the Referat, he was set to the task of analyzing air support traffic following upon the Allied landing in Italy.

The attacks of heavy bomber formations on the Alpine passes had completely disrupted the wire communication between the Italian Front and the General Staff. So for some time the latter depended entirely on intelligence received from air support traffic for a picture of the ground situation in this theatre. Most of these messages were intercepted by the SIS company in Montpellier, southern France, and telephoned immediately to the Marstall where they were immediately deciphered and evaluated. The copying, deciphering and analysis of the huge bulk of daily messages required much patient and detailed work, and the service he rendered in accomplishing all this gave the author a great sense of satisfaction. After the first crisis had passed and communication was restored with the Italian Front, he was rewarded with a furlough to Zakopane, Poland.

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XX. First Visit to Poland, November-December, 1943

Events in Poland had repeatedly startled the German public. Riots in Warsaw, never mentioned in the German press but whispered about by people who had some business in the "General-Government", had upon occasions called forth the use of heavy weapons and operations on the part of field units. Disturbing rumors had been circulating all along concerning the inflation and living conditions in this land. Even in Party circles, it was admitted that the administration of the country, for which 25,000 more employees were used than the British needed for all of India, was one of the worst in the world. So the author was grateful for an opportunity to see and learn with his own eyes.

The lovely winter resort of Zakopane, inhabited almost exclusively by wounded and the convalescent was scarcely an appropriate place to study conditions. But he was repelled by the social level to which the Poles had been reduced by law. In this over-populated country want was as wide-spread as insecurity. The national identity had been obliterated, giving place to an amorphous mass thrown from pillar to post, and alternating between murderous despair and deadly apathy. The difference between these sordid conditions and those created by Bolshevism in Russia was in that communism knew how to draw political power out of this degradation of man, and ruthlessly to make the masses serve its ends. The Nazis became ever more and more helpless in the face of the confusion and hopelessness they had created, achieved no mastery of the situation, and finally the whole crazy structure came tumbling down about their ears.

During the course of this winter happened the sudden and seemingly unmotivated withdrawal of Army Group Manstein from the Ukraine, concerning which the most shocking details were revealed by soldiers who returned home on furlough. This

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occupation troops were no longer permitted to move unarmed through the streets of the towns.

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campaign brought the Russians to the threshold of the Balkans. This debacle, and the indicated treachery of many German generals wrought the same effect as the systematic destruction of German cities by the strategic air forces of the western Allies. Everyone able to do so retired within himself more completely than he had ever done before. During this winter the author met the woman who was to become his wife. With her he availed himself of whatever still was left of music, the theatre and cultural life in Berlin in those days. Though he knew that in the end there was very little hope left for a decent future, he acquired a certain self-confidence. With this new hold on life he felt able to deal with fate whatever it might present.

XXI. Transfer to Southern France February-May, 1944

Gradually the author came to feel that if he could not get out of Germany very soon he would be engaged there. Therefore, he exerted his ingenuity to secure orders for duty in another country. Finally he succeeded in obtaining transfer to Montpellier in southern France. His experiences during this sojourn were strikingly analogous to those he encountered in Sicily. Again there was a sense of great events impending; yet the scene generally was weighted with the quiet tradition of European life.

For the second time in the course of the war the author found himself on duty in France. Railway junctions in central and southern France were still intact, but trains moved slowly and with great caution. In certain sections one could see for miles along the right of way, the scattered skeletons of burned-out cars and coaches. The previous good-will and hearty understanding that existed between the German soldiers and French civilians seemed very remote from the relations now prevailing; occupation troops were no longer permitted to move unarmed through the streets of the towns.

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France was the first land to feel the full weight of the Allied air arm, and, of course, charged all their dead to the German account. The number of its casualties in air raids, up to the time of the Invasion, exceeded by far the total losses of the French Army in the campaign of 1940. Economic life was moribund; inflation had begun, though it had by no means reached such desperate proportions as in the southern and eastern countries.

Only out of the way places were still clean. So it was with Mont Agel, 2500 feet above Monte Carlo, ten miles distant from Nice. The R/T station at Mont Agel resembled that of Noto surprisingly. As Malta lay just across from the latter, so Corsica could be seen from Mont Agel. However the enemy fighters mostly American, based on Corsica, were more sure of their superiority than were those on Malta. The few inexperienced German crews in southern France did not dare to face them. So the German SIS was the only agency that operated against them effectively. Decrease of airpower and increase of the importance of the SIS were almost proportional.

The out-station had a pleasantly high standard of living. Food and billets were excellent, and the old, interesting mountain towns of the Sea Alps invited to many fascinating excursions. The British major, in whose fine villa the platoon was billeted, possessed an excellent library, the volumes of which were perused with great ardor. In addition there was an atmosphere of quietude about the place, and the inhabitants enjoyed freedom from oppression, coercion and sorrow, which gradually was becoming a rarity in Europe.

Southern France, which had known no enemy intrusion in a period of 700 years, seemed essentially more sensible in its national pride than the center and north of France. Life in the ancient and beautiful towns like Arles, Nimes and Montpellier

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made a wearying impression since the southern Frenchmen seemed to lack even more in initiative than other French groups. This part of France was accustomed to live off the trade incidental to import from Africa, which commerce for two years past had been strangled by the war; therefore, the standing of living was low, especially in Marseille, which city made a lurid impression upon the author.

Perhaps not all would have been lost to the Germans in the course of this year if the German Command would have renounced its dreams of conquest and power, and would have handed over the fate of the people to personalities who, considering the trend of affairs, would have found the courage and acumen to make peace with the adversaries. Four bloody years had exhausted the original strength of the Wehrmacht to a great extent. Replacements in 1944 were most uneven. In southern France, the author repeatedly saw maneuvers in which the troops were either children or old men interspersed among whom were a few front-line troops represented by non-commissioned officers recently released from the hospital. Such a nondescript army was incapable of controlling a rebellious country, and ^{facing} invasion by a power that had mobilized the reserves of a whole hemisphere for this very purpose.

Without doubt a large number of Germans realized this; but they were too deeply enmeshed in the war for any compromise. Officers and soldiers alike had become accustomed to facing hopeless situations. Only the most extraordinary men could withstand such circumstances without losing some portion of their moral stature. But no nation is composed of extraordinary men alone. So a sense of inferiority and unrelieved hopelessness began to erode the once faultless morale of the Wehrmacht.

Seven German classes had already known little but war. And they who have dealt in death as their trade for years on end can easily be lost to the influences of the

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cultured life. So signs of decay began to loom behind the ever more ruthless rigidity of the system. Each individual, thrown more and more upon his own resources, resulted in many taking flight in things of the moment; those who could afford it indulged in violent pleasures, exploiting to the dregs any advantage licit or illicit which opportunity afforded. Misfortune never improves man so long as he possesses even the shreds of power. German conscientiousness and rectitude, and the characteristics termed by Fichte most essentially German, viz., to do things well for their own sake, all seemed to have vanished from German life.

XXII. Assignment in Warsaw, May-July 1944

The author's hope of witnessing at first hand a motorized retreat northward from southern France was frustrated by a message from the Marstall ordering him to return to Berlin shortly before the American Seventh Army landed on the Riviera.

About this time political supervision began to extend even to the Luftwaffe, which, as a privileged service without traditions, had been considered up to this time politically reliable. A large number of its generals had been Goering's comrades in World War I, and the most famous bomber and fighter pilots, who were held up as shining examples to German youth, had almost all been recruited out of the Hitlerjugend. Though there was a lack of capable men on the Luftwaffe General Staff, distinguished officers, who were specialists in their respective fields, were replaced because of their liberal political views by snappy young general staff officers, who could not even understand the languages of the enemy countries their sections were concerned with, but who simply stood high in the Party's good books. Even the enlisted men of the Referat were not immune in this spying campaign, and the author, accustomed to the free-thinking atmosphere of the out-stations, got into trouble more than once because some off-hand remark of his was reported by

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officially appointed sycophants to his superiors.

Therefore he was glad when after his return from France new orders directed that he proceed to Warsaw in order to supervise the interception and evaluation work of a W/T platoon that had been transferred there from the West in order to monitor American traffic from airfields in the Ukraine. The German Command had been completely unprepared for the Allied landings in Africa (the public's attention being adroitly diverted from this catastrophe by the clamorous publicity given to the occupation of Vichy France), and it got a major surprise from the Russians every year. So of course it lived in a continuous state of alarm. With the announcement in the Allied press of the prospect of shuttle flights, and with the actual occasional landing of some American bomber units on Russian airfields, the Luftwaffe SIS, at least, took measures to establish a chain of W/T out-stations in the East, of which the station at Warsaw was one of the most important, in order to ascertain the nature of the American organization stationed in Russia.

The exercise of a little political acumen would have revealed how unnecessary was this display. This Allied joint action was so contrary to the principle of isolation practised by the Russians with Asiatic thoroughness; neither did it conform with American business sense to place within the reach of such a self-willed ally any very great quantity of valuable personnel and equipment. Moreover, after development of the P-51 long range fighter every province of dwindling Germany lay within easy range of fighter-escorted long range bombers. In fact, as events proved, the amount of American air power shifted to Russia comprised no more than a token force.

In spite of the author's representations to the Chi-Stellé of the futility of this work, he was nevertheless held for about three months in this Russian Referat at Warsaw. He had very little to do since the American traffic on the five airfields

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in the Poltava area was quite irrelevant. However, living conditions in the secluded confines of the Polish National Athletic Stadium where the unit was billeted, were of the best. Indoor swimming pools and athletic equipment were at the disposal of the soldiers during their free time. In addition, the surroundings of the Polish metropolis on the curving Vistula did not lack a rural charm contrasting sharply with the inexpressible squalor of the big town.

Soldiers were not allowed to enter Warsaw except in groups. Neither the author nor his friends went to the city unless ordered to do so. Every month, so he was told an average of 200 Germans were murdered there in criminal assaults; more than a division during the course of the five years of German occupation. No military power can tolerate such lawlessness, but must undertake even harsh punitive action. However, to the everlasting shame of the German governmental agencies, they proved unable to put an end to excesses and maintain order. The military authorities laid the blame upon the civil government and vice versa. But the blame lay basically in the inherent defects of the whole system, which precluded men of capacity from responsible posts, leaving them open only to corrupt and weak creatures, devoid not only of any sense of humanity but deep-dyed in iniquity.

In Warsaw the Germans led a life totally secluded from the Polish civilians. While the Germans were in need of nothing, nobody was really happy to be in that city. Yet the misery that appeared on the surface was perhaps not as widespread as might be imagined. Certainly among the two million inhabitants of the city there were those who earned high wages and lived comfortably. The author got the impression that during Poland's twenty years of independence a new middle class had arisen. Specialists in matters of trade assured him that the Warsaw manufacturing industry

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had become an integral and indispensable part of the German economy. At the time the city was even more intact than one was accustomed to expect in German cities of similar size. Moreover the destruction, such as it was, having been caused by artillery fire, was of a different character than that caused by aerial bombing. Some of the palaces of the Polish nobility still had a majestic appearance in spite of shell damage. Their tile work was so solid and clean as to remind one of Roman ruins.

The personalities in the Russian Referat of Warsaw were strange indeed. Most of them were of Baltic extraction, and their mentality and speech were tinged with the East. The East is always a great enigma to those born and reared in the Occident; so it was at times difficult to follow what these people thought and said. Generally the penetrative thought of the members of the Russian Referat was far more shallow than the author had been accustomed to observe among the men of the Referat of the West. While in the West and South the analysts and evaluators were stimulated by their activities to generalization, and saw in every fact and event as reflected in the reports they handled a connection with their own personal fate, the Referat personnel in Warsaw, despite its small number, worked individually like cogs in a machine, and were personally unaffected by the significant events of which they had so rich a knowledge.

This general unconcern seemed almost typical of the East, for even in the files of the Referat the author sought in vain for a comprehensive and intelligent summary on the Russian Air Force. There were certain A-2 reports covering specialized matters (training of Russian parachute units, Russian fighter bomber tactics, and PVO organization), but there existed no fundamental and thorough studies. On the contrary reports to be found in the files, especially those covering the early months of the war, were crammed with peremptory and stupid judgements and conclusions.

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Something of the background and hidden depths of Russia life were revealed in certain of the prisoner of war interrogations on file, and in the fascinatingly gruesome biographies of deserters in the first stages of the war. So the author remembers the curriculum vitae of a German Balt who served for some time as jiu-jitsu teacher in a university for commissars, and who escaped from Russia in an airplane, and landed on a German airfield near Stalingrad. He had written a profound study on his observations and experiences at this Russian seat of learning. Even the instructor's hand-book of the Russian SIS school in Minsk, which was captured by the Germans, betrayed something of the icily pragmatic spirit of Bolshevism, which to have challenged, together with Anglo-American might, was one of the greatest follies of world history.

Despite its primitiveness, and technical and human inferiorities, Russian was superior to the Reich from the beginning in the following:

- a. The sense of realism with which Russia regarded the prospect of a total war, and the energy with which they prepared for it.
- b. The implacable determination with which the Bolsheviks pursued their aims unaffected by the human sacrifices involved.
- c. The thoroughness of their planning, and the subtlety and cunning of their strategy and tactics.
- d. The impartial severity with which even outstanding personalities were judged, and removed from their posts in the event they proved inefficient.

For the first time the author now began to reflect upon the terrible consequences that would ensue upon a loss of the war in the East. Like an avalanche the Slavic hordes from the over-populated countries of the East threatened to engulf the

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comparatively thinly-populated provinces of eastern Germany. It was to be perceived that if the Wehrmacht failed to withhold the flood, there would follow another splitting up of the German people such as occurred during the Reformation, followed by centuries of disunity. Just now they were in process of that unification, which is never possible without a central, concrete national power forming the nation's character.

National Socialism had monopolized the people's education. In undertaking to shape a new image of man, it persecuted entire nations, and committed crimes which will require generations of Germans to expiate. Yet it proved singularly sterile in creating a new type of outstanding character. Splendid soldiers the German people had produced in all its previous wars, so it was an empty claim of the Party to maintain that the current military heroes were the sole product of its particular system. It was not by chance that the Party functionaries were met with distrust on the part of the German people, while in occupied territories they were regarded with hatred by the civilian populations, and with mockery and disdain by the German soldiers. What seemed to impress these Party functionaries most with respect to the East was the Bolshevist system of education which aimed only to produce cunning and pliable tools of the State. During the latter years, the principles of instruction found in communist schools served as a model for National Socialist schools designed for the training of Party leaders.

After the Russian breakthrough at Minsk, the company billets ideally located at the gates of Warsaw, became a collecting center for the retreating German troops. They showed evidence of excessive exposure and hardship, and were a much more depressing spectacle than the at least adequately-fed German units as described by the author which he had seen a little earlier in France. Only the Luftwaffe Signal

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Corps troops retained a neat appearance, and still reminded one of the German soldiers as they were at the beginning of the war.

As the Russians approached Warsaw, the Referat was transferred to Cottbus, south of Berlin. The railway journey required seven days, a testimony of the paralysis of the transport system even in this area where relatively little air activity occurred. The author exerted himself to escape from what were his then sterile duties and finally succeeded in having ^{himself} transferred to an SIS battalion in Hungary. To arrange matters he was sent to Debrecen.

XXIII. Experiences in Hungary, August 1944

After Rumania and Bulgaria had changed sides, Hungary was also rife with internal collapse. Decay and dissolution characterized its economic and social conditions. The Honved (Hungarian Army) appeared to have only sufficient remaining strength with which to continue its withdrawals. As a matter of fact, most of its regiments went over to the enemy whenever German vigilance relaxed sufficiently to give them a chance. The physical condition of the people was better than among those of any other country of Europe, but their industrial and cultural level was too low to figure to any degree in a world war. Even in the few large cities, the mass of the population lived in humble huts without sanitation or comfort. The well-known university town of Debrecen (120,000 inhabitants) gave the impression of an enormous village, except for its center which dated back to the 18th century.

The damage wreaked on this country by the 15th USAAF was impressive. On the Budapest airfield hundreds of German aircraft lay strafed and blasted. At the time of the bombing attack on the marshalling yards of Szolnok, a nearby hospital crammed with thousands of wounded, recently arrived from the Rumanian battlefields, was totally destroyed. The Debrecen railway station resembled a crater field, and there was danger to life in stepping off the trains which usually halted only at night.

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The Hungarian upper classes continued to live in the midst of plenty and splendor, more by virtue of historical privilege than any intrinsic worth. Theirs was the power and wealth of the country. Now, having lost all influence in the conduct of the war, the Government was passed helplessly from hand to hand through a monotonous repetition of stages through which Italy, Rumania and Bulgaria had each passed in turn.

The Germans felt uncomfortable and insecure in the land, and made awkward efforts to behave as invited guests. Idiotic military regulations forbade a soldier who lived in this country to purchase even one of the still-excellent Hungarian meals. The German Command seemed to have lost all contact with reality. After all, could the small nations be censured for seeking to come to terms with those powers, which by this time were patently to become the overlords of the future?

The companies of the SIS battalion were established in three very primitive school buildings, and the troops were billeted in the tiny, vari-colored houses of this hospitable people. Eating and drinking seemed to be the primary objectives of the life of these people. Differences in the level of interests even within the same military service, were most marked between the East and the West. It transcended by far anything that could be explained by the mere variance in living conditions.

Even the SIS work here presented a blunter and less intelligent face. There was lacking here the technical cunning, the inventiveness, and the development and use of ever new techniques and methods, which made service on the Anglo-American front so fascinating and interesting. During the entire course of the war Russia lay within range of HF interception. Surely the detailed knowledge the SIS possessed of the East was thanks to the effectiveness of cryptanalysis, even more

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comprehensive here than in the West. The data on individual units was also more voluminous than in the West. In addition, transfers and concentrations of aircraft, details of the Russian supply service, and even enemy intentions, were if anything better documented than on the western front.

Nevertheless, considered as a whole, the work of the SIS in the East could not be compared in quality with that of the West. Despite the overwhelming quantity of intercepted material the East could boast, its final evaluation never reached the standard the SIS of the West had attained from the beginning; it lacked the deeper understanding and human background. The high level of performance of the SIS of the West was reached not alone because of its knowledge of the flow of enemy supplies and material, as well as his industrial capacity, all of which was veiled in the East, but also because of the psychological parallel and similar processes of thinking between the German and the Anglo-Americans, all of which was lacking in its study of the Russians. So it seemed that the highly-trained SIS specialists in the East attained to their skill in a manner vague, routine and indistinct. This feature of indefiniteness was also carried over into their reports, which emphasized the material aspect of things rather than lucid and concrete conclusions. Their ideas remained always within the framework of personal remarks, and never ascended to the level of generalization.

Perhaps had the entire power of the German nation been concentrated upon the East alone, under more capable leadership and a disciplined control, some permanent and durable successes might have been attained. All of the East is a virgin land; the freshness and vigor of its plains and mountains strangely excited everyone deriving from the comparatively effete nations of the West. The ultimate contest for supremacy between Asiatic Bolshevism and the political renaissance of the European countries was inevitable, and at the best could only have been postponed.

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But under no circumstances should it have been undertaken concurrently with a war with the western powers. The madness of engaging in a two-front war for a second time resulted not only in the loss to Germany of its natural European hegemony, but also of the best part of its people's substance. Moreover, it has made of this continent a heartbreak house of misery, and annihilated its political and cultural autonomy. Whatever shape the next phase of evolution assumes, Germany was right in one thing: that in modern times, small nations and peoples can thrive only upon sufferance of the greater ones. Now it falls to the lot of powers beyond Europe to develop the creative thought that only can underlie the establishment of a sound new order.

XXIV. Marriage. Activation of an R/T Platoon in Namslau, Second Half 1944

Returning to Berlin, the author was granted a ten-day matrimonial leave. It was the last time he visited his parents, and both the first and last time that he found himself in the circle of the family that he was about to marry into. His wedding day coincided with the re-capture of Paris by the Allies. Although the eastern Front remained quiet at this time, he and his wife realized that they probably would not see their respective homes again. Upon expiration of the furlough both of them had to return to their duties in the Marstall, where in the meanwhile the eighty-hour week was introduced.

However the author was very soon sent to Upper Silesia in order to establish and take charge of an R/T platoon, designed to intercept 15th USAAF air-to-ground traffic. This was just the sort of mission that he had been seeking throughout the duration of the entire war. The platoon was attached to an SIS company, in Namslau which was commanded by a World War I veteran who co-operated splendidly. Linguistic personnel from a deactivated interpreters' school were assigned to the platoon; this personnel, however, still had to be introduced to the techniques of R/T

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interception. The task at hand proved most agreeable to these intelligent and willing workers who were rather surprised to find such good living conditions at such a late stage of the war. The platoon quickly attained a high degree of proficiency and enjoyed a fine reputation both with the Silesia Fighter Command and with the ZAF, although visible results were limited by the lack of German fighters.

Nanslau was a little old town, lying quite alone amid a broad plain. It was pitiful to behold the worn out, undernourished oldsters of the Volksturm drilling on Sunday afternoons, the only free time which they enjoyed. The manpower of the countryside comprised almost entirely foreign workers who were many times more numerous than the remainder of the German male population. The same condition prevailed in other communities of Eastern Germany. The sympathies of these men by no means were with Germany, and only the German Wehrmacht stood between the enemy and the women and children at home.

Here the author was granted a peaceful three months, although the living conditions surrounding him became ever more oppressive. After the unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life a new wave of totalitarianism crushed out the last vestiges of freedom in German everyday life. Working hours were increased beyond the endurance of the individual, who thus lost all possibilities of recreation. On the whole, particularly in the case of white-collar workers, the new tactics failed to achieve their objective. The policy had an especially detrimental effect on those poor girls who slaved under the supervision of unsoldierly fools and cowards. The writer's wife, working in the Marstall where this new policy was also being carried out, was physically unable to endure such hardships and fell seriously ill. Although he enjoyed a personal acquaintanceship with nearly all the officers there, the author was unable to have her schedule alleviated. The doctors' hands also were tied by stupid directives.

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The author learned with dismay the news of Rundstedt's Ardennes offensive which reached its high-water mark in the siege of Bastogne. In the face of preparations being made by the Russians for their greatest offensive, this struck him as the apex of all previous folly. It sacrificed the last elite troops in Germany, and his own brother was probably among those killed there. The German press, after a brief period of incense-burning, became very reticent. No details were ever released. The Party maintained its grip on the souls of the people by printing, on the one hand, descriptions of the unmerciful fate that Germany could expect if the war were lost, and, on the other, fairy tales about prospective wonder weapons.

It was a dismal New Year. All military and civilian travel over the Christmas holidays was forbidden, and thus the writer had to renounce his monthly trip to Berlin, where he used to read the latest SIS and PWI reports, and spend one or two evenings in the company of his wife. The Russian winter offensive seemed imminent; it was expected to take place during the second week in January. During the short winter afternoons, when bad weather prevented any air activity from the South, the author took long walks in the country. It was apparent to him that no natural barriers existed which might stem the tide, and that the Germans could only be saved through a powerful and united Reich. The collapse of Germany would mean the obliteration of a tradition and culture which had endured for at least seven hundred years. In the same way had collapsed the German feudal order in the Baltic countries, when the Poles, allied with the Lithuanians, defeated their army in the Battle of Tanneberg in 1410.

On the 12th of January the dreaded Russian winter offensive commenced. On the first night of the offensive, operators of the R/T platoon were called upon to

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help unload German casualties being brought back to base hospitals from the front. The wounded related that, after an artillery barrage of unheard of intensity, huge Russian mobile columns had simply overrun the German lines, still numbed from the effects of this barrage. The author realized that there was now no time to be lost. He took the next train to Berlin to procure orders for the withdrawal of his platoon. Amid the indescribable confusion of those times it took him two days before he could find an officer willing to assume responsibility for the withdrawal of the platoon. With orders in his pocket he hurried back to his unit. Breslau was already crammed with refugees; women and children stood shivering in the icy corridors of the railway station. Regular travel between Breslau and points to the east was already interrupted. Jumping on a locomotive which was slowly passing he finally arrived at Namslau. Children were skating on the frozen lake and the civilian population seemed to have no idea that Russian armor was but a few kilometers away.

XXV. Retreats/ Capture/ January to April 1945

The author succeeded in withdrawing his platoon to the mountains of Silesia. There were trainloads of refugees in which hundreds of babies and small children had perished of cold, hunger, disease and filth. At each station a new crowd of desperate, half-crazed individuals stormed the over-crowded cars. Amidst this wretchedness, he and his men made their way to the Schnee grubenbaude, the highest mountain peak in Central Europe. There, in an arctic climate, they lived for some weeks, poorly lodged and scantily nourished, until the Russian encirclement of Breslau cut their wire communication with Berlin and completed their isolation. The fact that the platoon was now of no operational use to its battalion, prompted the Funkaufklaerungsfuehrer Reich to transfer it to another battalion, and to order it to Heiligenstadt.

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The author had received the impression that German life in the East, where for centuries a stable order based on hard work and righteousness had prevailed, was at an end. Now as he journeyed toward the west he realized that the very core of Germany was tottering. The miserable end of Fascist Italy, the endless suffering of the Poles, all paled before the fateful drama which was now being enacted. For despite the increasing and senseless slaughter, not to mention to destruction of homes and cities which now was beginning to appear total, Germany would not realize that the war was lost. The public became paralyzed as resistance grew weaker and less coherent. Nevertheless, driven on by ruthless fanatics, the populace could not lay down its arms in a given locality until the actual arrival of the enemy. Bridges were blown up and supply dumps demolished. Even villages and cities which had survived the worst air attacks were reduced to rubble by this insane resistance, at a time when even the die-hards among the Germans were convinced that further resistance was futile.

Moreover, the full weight of enemy air attack was now being felt. Millions of inhabitants of the rich eastern provinces of Germany, who up to this point had come through the war unharmed, were suddenly forced in the middle of the severest winter to leave their homes and possessions in order to save their lives. They were driven by the vision of what the Bolsheviks did to those who remained behind. Allied strategic bombers dropped, day and night, thousands of tons of bombs on the helpless cities of central Germany which were teeming with streams of refugees. Had a state of want and national emergency given birth to the Nazi Party, they now re-appeared to demand their payment. Everything was lacking; food, weapons, fuel, medical assistance, and all hope that these conditions could be changed. At this time a German life, even that of a civilian, was held in the cheapest esteem.

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The author and his men began their journey to Heiligenstadt in the good weather of early spring. During the daytime travel was virtually paralyzed by the activity of Allied fighter bombers which continually attacked and destroyed the few remaining locomotives. Although, as a rule, locomotives were the prime objectives, human casualties were invariably high, the more so since the hysterical people were too numbed to take cover. Nearby cottages and dwellings often were set aflame by incendiary ammunition. No sign of any German defense was to be seen. Public life was completely paralyzed; most of the towns were a landscape of ruins, and those which were still intact were crammed to such an extent with refugees that not even a piece of bread was to be bought in the shops. During the ten days of the journey the author and his men lived on potatoes which they bought from farmers in villages where the trains were forced to halt.

In Heiligenstadt, which was located practically in the geographic center of Germany, the author, strangely enough was able to spend a further two months of virtually unharrassed existence. Typical of the uprooting which had taken place during the six years of war was the fact that 10,000 homeless refugees, for the most part women with children, and 3000 wounded, most of them suffering from head injuries, were added to the normal peace-time population of 10,000. This condition could be found in any German town of similar size which had escaped destruction.

The food situation was critical; during these weeks the author also experienced those constant pangs of hunger which, during the last years of the war, had become quite normal in the cities. Only the clergy still presented a well-fed appearance; for this reason the headquarters staff of the author's battalion shrewdly chose to billet themselves with the amply-nourished nuns at a local convent.

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The whole first month was devoted to the erection of a new R/T intercept station; owing to a lack of almost all necessary tools and equipment, progress was unbelievably slow. In the meantime the author partook of social life in the little town which he found friendly and warm-hearted, in spite of the hardships and restrictions which the people had to endure. Thus, some weeks after the capitulation, when he learned that the Russians had occupied Heiligenstadt, he felt as if he had lost his own home for the second time. -

At the end of March the situation in Heiligenstadt became untenable for the battalion and it moved to a little town in the Harz mountains. Two weeks later it moved off again toward the south. It had no definite place in mind in view of the Allied advances which were being virtually unopposed. The author now realized that for him there was but one duty in this shattered world - that of looking after the last person left to him on this earth. When Berlin was threatened his wife, together with her comrades who had been employed as women auxiliaries since 1942, were transferred to Oberhaching, near Munich. There the Luftwaffe simply abandoned them to their fate, since the time had come when their services were no longer required. The author obtained food and lodging for his wife, and then searched the Bavarian mountains for a hiding place for himself. A simple peasant on a lonely farm employed him as hired man. When the Americans entered Munich he could no longer remain in solitude, and he returned to the village where he had left his wife.

Together they witnessed the shelling of the town by the Americans before they entered the next morning. He saw criminals, deserters and all the human dregs of Germany come crawling to the conquerors to offer their services, while those who had done their duty all these years streamed into the prison camps. It occurred to him that to try and escape the fate of the whole nation would mean losing his integrity. The German state may have been obliterated, but its people still remained

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the most numerous, most industrious, and most staunch in will - power and tradition on the shattered continent of Europe. In its darkest hour Germany needed more than ever the selfless devotion of those individuals still able to render service, who, for the most part, were those same soldiers who had stood off the entire world for almost six years. Having done all within his power to provide for his wife, he felt that his place was with his military comrades. Accordingly, he went to the military government and gave himself up.

XXVI. Conclusion

He was taken to a prisoner of war enclosure, and after several days was removed by a colonel of the U.S. Army Air Forces whose diligence, foresight, and human understanding are responsible exclusively for not only this volume, but for the entire study on the Luftwaffe SIS.

Location of the places visited by the author in the course of his service in the Luftwaffe SIS is shown on the accompanying map. (See Figure No. 6).

Figure No. 6

